



Introduction

The Archive in Performance Studies

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Introduction: The Archive in Performance Studies

Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade

The essays in this book explore the boundaries between performance and the archive. In conventional terms, such endeavor may seem rather straight forward because the two domains, performance and archive, are often understood as opposed to each other, one representing the fleeting and ephemeral, the other signifying stability and permanence. However, these clear-cut ontologies have been challenged in recent years. The notions of archives expand from the idea of a physical storage space that preserves objects and documents to virtual archives of data collection accessed through computer screens, collective memory engaged in reinterpretations of history, or political dimensions of archives invested with issues of accessibility and power. Performance as a concept has equally expanded and become the focus of attention in many areas beyond conventional understandings of performance as theatre productions and social rituals. Already in 2001 Jon McKenzie identified meanings related to such broad areas as benchmark strategies in business relations or techno-performances in space science, robotics, and computing industries.¹ New ways of understanding archives, history, and memory emerge and address theories of enactment and intervention, while concepts of performance

constantly proliferate and enable a critical focus on archival residue. Hence, the title of this volume proposes a twofold movement of ongoing and mutual interaction: “performing archives” refers to a process in which human beings create and handle the archives, but it also alludes to how archives are formative in shaping history and thus perform human beings, structure and give form to our thoughts and ideas. Such focus will allow a critical investigation of some core issues in terms of performance studies: how to engage in the rich repository of contemporary performance art forms and practices, and keep them present for the here and now, and how to grasp the disciplinary mechanics and performative powers at work in documentation and archives.

This book project is not a collection of conference proceedings, but is nevertheless closely related to a conference event. We, the editors, joined Performance Studies international (PSi) in the early 2000s with a specific attention to the area of contemporary visual arts and how performance theories could provide new insights into art historical research and methodologies. Our focus was not particularly on performance art as such, as we believe performance theory can also be applied to more conventional and “stable” art objects such as painting and sculpture, as well as to visual objects and phenomena outside the realm of “fine arts.” Our intention was to broaden the field of performance studies further by looking into the performative aspects of the more conventional work (as a performance, as an object) itself. Some years later, in 2008, we organized and held the annual PSi conference at the University of Copenhagen. Within the theme of *Interregnum* we encouraged presentations, performances, and other projects that would address the issue of “in between states”—asking questions about how changes and transitions are shaped, and what constitutes the brief moment of instability between two sets of conditions. One perspective of the conference was concerned with how imagery and visual culture mobilize ideas of identity and belonging, emphasizing “the role of vision and visibility as inherently interdisciplinary phenomena.”²

A large number of participants at the Copenhagen conference addressed the notion of archives, questioning elements of documentation and mediatization through the use of photography, audio, and video recordings, as well as the role of art institutions in terms of preserving and presenting live performance art to scholars and broader audiences. The issue of *interregnum*, the in-betweenness, may be said to focus on

the process of transformation, the gap between the performance and its recording or reproduction. The in-betweenness may help theorize the liveliness of playback or the sense of presence in reenactments. To us such perspectives outline an important agenda for the PSi community, expressed as follows in the introduction to the conference programme:

One of the most urgent issues is the aspect of documentation: how and why should a performance be documented, described or stored as archival material—is it even possible within the ontology of performance? At the same time we will see a number of documentations being played or displayed during the conference, as references to events of the past, as source material for visual analyses, as works of art in their own right.³

A number of the contributions in this volume are thus written by scholars and artists who presented their work at the PSi conference in Copenhagen in 2008, and who subsequently responded positively to our call for papers on “performing archives.” As an ironic sign of archival instability, the website of the Interregnum conference, complete with postproduced image galleries of events and activities, has vanished into virtual oblivion in the gaps of storage transfer in between two host servers, and has never resurfaced. This may lead us not only to ponder on the impermanence of digital data collections, but also to read this volume as an archival resonance of ideas and notions of in-betweenness that circulated during the PSi conference in 2008.

When we address the issue of archives in this volume, is it not to commemorate past activities of a bygone conference event. Rather, it is to stress the continuous and pressing relevance of the archive for performance studies in general and for PSi in particular. The PSi organization emphasizes in its founding principles a close collaboration and interaction between researchers and artistic practitioners within the field of performance. It states on its website that the organization is dedicated to “promote communication and exchange among artists, thinkers, activists and academics working in the field of performance”, and that “the research conducted under this umbrella term is interdisciplinary and is strongly rooted in the interaction between theory and practice.”⁴ One of the main concerns in this relation is the question of how to carry out research on performance because much of the source material used by scholars is not limited to the performance in itself, but consists of various

types of documentation and mediated versions related to the performance, in the form of scripts, scores, notations, instructions, mappings, photographs, video recordings, or something else. Even within theatrical and staged events which rely on scripts or scores to be performed again and again, one performance is never identical to the next. Some scholars write about performances they haven't seen or experienced themselves.⁵ Even scholars, who have attended an actual performance, still activate some kind of memory device during the reflective analytical processes of describing, structuring, and theorizing the work after the event. This paradoxical dependence on archival memory is no more clearly articulated, as when Rebecca Schneider decides "to write about a performance that I could not recall."⁶

Revisiting a performance is also relevant for artists who may wish to reflect on their own performance in order to evaluate and sharpen key issues, or consult other artists' works for consumption, inspiration, or collaboration. In-depth knowledge of what is conceived of as the "original" performance is a prerequisite for reenactments, whether in battle reenactments as part of Living History, or in artistic reenactments of one's own or others' performance artworks of the past. Parts of performance studies known as PaR (Performance as Research) use creative practice as a methodological approach in its own right, and thus emphasizes a mutual response between doing and knowing in the scholarly process.⁷ The issue of knowledge production through practice should also influence the outcome of research processes. Dwight Conquergood, for example, criticizes the hegemony of the academic text as the conventional outcome of performance research, and calls for the acknowledgement of performance as a form of scholarly representation that can bring the performance paradigm much further by thinking of performance "as a complement, alternative, supplement, and critique of inscribed texts."⁸ Simone Osthoff has remarked something similar in relation to contemporary art in general where, she claims, "the boundaries between work, writing, documentation, and reception are often fluid and include the multiple institutional spaces that artists help transform."⁹ Thus, there is not only a close relationship between research and performance—since many scholars are practising artists themselves, and many artists engage in critical theorizing about the way in which they do or perform—but also because the distinct categories of artwork and research can no longer be upheld. Thus Richard Schechner, himself active as both scholar and

performer, notes that the “relationship between studying performance and doing performance is integral.”¹⁰

The blurring of the boundaries and the integral dynamics of studying and doing performance may explain why the issue of performance and its documentation has been central to performance studies since the emergence of the performance studies field in the 1980s. It is closely related to the ontology of performance. “Performances are actions,” Richard Schechner writes, and elaborates on the broad spectrum of disciplines and approaches within performance studies by noting that “whatever is being studied is regarded as practices, events, and behaviors, not as ‘objects’ or ‘things’.” This quality of ‘liveness’—even when dealing with media or archival materials—is at the heart of performance studies.”¹¹ Marvin Carlson notes how performance as a concept has become a central metaphor for the studies of culture and how the term has led to a change in focus from the “what” of culture to the “how” of culture. Performance as critical discourse allows for focusing attention on data, not as accumulations of cultural material, but as a source to how data lives and operates within a culture “by its actions.”¹² Jon McKenzie similarly notes that performance in modern times has taken on new meanings as well as functions, not only as an analytical tool but as a disciplinary instrument: “What has occurred has been the articulation and rapid extension of performance concepts into formalized systems of discourses and practices, into sociotechnical systems that have themselves become institutionalized.”¹³ Peggy Phelan in her well-known and influential chapter on the ontology of performance claims that “performance in a strict ontological sense is nonreproductive.”¹⁴ Phelan traces performance’s inability to be reproduced to linguistic speech act theory in which a performative utterance cannot be repeated and each reproduction is a new act performed. Drawing on J. L. Austin, Phelan states that “performative speech acts refer only to themselves, they *enact* the activity the speech signifies.”¹⁵ Phelan points out how this enactment of performative speech acts’ own ontology is important for Derrida in the process of writing because language in this way can be rendered independent from any referent outside itself. For Phelan, the inability to be reproduced or repeated is the strength of performance because it resists the economics of reproduction and remains traceless within the ideologies of capital. Phelan’s reflections led her to the following ontological statement, which itself has been reproduced

numerous times in performance studies literature, and which is likewise referred to in several of the essays in this volume:

Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being ... becomes itself through disappearance.¹⁶

Phelan's ontology of performance has generated a number of critical responses, all of which contribute to the continuous enrichment of theories and practices within performance studies. Philip Auslander, for example, has questioned the binary oppositional status of performance and its reproduction—not because he rejects the value of live art, but rather because the status of performance as “live” has changed drastically in a cultural situation which is increasingly dominated by mass media. Auslander wants to deconstruct the perception of the oppositional relationship formulated in the distinctions between live and mediatized cultural forms. He argues that both live performance and mediatization need to be discussed in light of their positions within cultural economy, and proposes to “investigate that relationship as historical and contingent, not as ontologically given or technologically determined.”¹⁷ Drawing on Walter Benjamin and Jean Baudrillard, Auslander argues that the live is an effect of mediatization (and not the other way around) because recording technologies have made it possible to actually think of performance, in its existing representation, as “live.”¹⁸

Rebecca Schneider, too, discusses Peggy Phelan's ontological definition of performance in relation to the archive, understood as records, objects, and documents of events and bodies. Schneider refers to the Greek root of the Archon, the house of the Head of State, which leads to the notion of archive as a Western phallogocentric cultural thrall of documents and objects that are visible and “housable.” Performance, as suggested by Phelan and others, is thus antithetical to the archive because of its disappearance, because performance resists the “ocular hegemony” of the visible remains of the archive. Referring to poststructuralist insights, however, Schneider notes that the archive itself produces a loss, that objects, documents, and records are marked by disappearance, and concludes: “Indeed, remains

become themselves through disappearance as well.”¹⁹ Schneider thus dissolves the borderline distinctions by concluding that both performance and the archive materialize through disappearance, only differently, and that “the archive itself becomes a social *performance* of retroaction.”²⁰

A third approach is formulated by Diana Taylor, who finds the discourse on the “ephemerality” of performance to be profoundly political because it invites an inevitable question: “Whose memories, traditions, and claims to history disappear if performance practices lack the staying power to transmit vital knowledge?”²¹ According to Taylor, much of the debate deals with language—not only as the notion of performativity in linguistic theory, but also because many anthropological inquiries have been informed by a “textual turn” in cultural studies, only to be challenged by the “performative turn.” Another dimension of language lies in challenging the predominance of writing in Western epistemologies by underlining the notion of embodied culture instead. The archive in this sense represents the permanence of documents, records, maps, texts, and other material remains that appear resistant to change. The conflict, or “rift,” is not about the written versus the spoken word, but between the two entities identified by Taylor as “the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials ... and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge.”²² The relationship between performance and archive is neither sequential nor binarily constructed, but interacts in intrinsic patterns of exchange and expansion, as when concepts such as for example “oral literature” suggests the repertoire transferred to the archive.²³ For Taylor, a crucial role for performance studies is to “take seriously the repertoire of embodied practices as an important system of knowing and transmitting knowledge.”²⁴ These discussions of ontology through concepts such as “liveness,” “performance remains,” and “repertoire” are only few, albeit influential, contributions to a deconstruction of the contested dichotomy of performance versus the archive.

Ontologies

This volume, too, contributes to the ongoing critical discussions of performance, and its disappearance, of the ephemeral and its reproduction, of archives and mediatized recordings of liveness. The many contributions by excellent scholars and artists from a broad range of interdisciplinary fields as well as from various locations in research geographies

demonstrate that despite the extensive discourse on the relationship between performance and the archive that has already taken place, inquiry into the productive tensions between ephemerality and permanence is by no means outdated or exhausted. The anthology is divided into three parts, of which the first part contains essays which continue or revisit the discussions of performance ontology summed up above.

In the very first essay, “Archiving Legacies: Who Cares for Performance Remains?” Heike Roms writes about the actual and physical encounter with the archive in a research context. Although based on her current research into the early history of performance art in Britain, Roms’s contribution has far more general and theoretical implications as well. In arguing for an understanding of the archive as an extension of the artwork as a time-based and collaborative practice, indeed as a part of the body of work that makes it permanently present rather than “lost” in a past, Roms asks us to (re)consider the dimension of duration in performance art. Archival practices involves *caring*, Roms claims, i.e. taking actively part in the artwork, indeed *performing* it, which blurs the boundaries between artistic, scholarly, and archival work. Roms adopts and develops the notion of “legacy” in order to emphasize the aspects of time, object, and affect that characterize archival practices. Throughout her essay Roms provides eloquent examples of such archival practices and her engagement in and care for the artworks she is concerned with.

Amelia Jones offers another insight into the archival encounter. Her contribution, “Unpredictable Temporalities: The Body and Performance in (Art) History,” investigates the archival aspect of art history and particularly time-based works. Jones argues that time-based work opens up to fundamental questions about how history is written and how within art history it is organized in well-known formats such as exhibitions, style history, canons, and the like that involve aesthetic judgement. Instead of giving oneself up to such conventional and commodifiable representations of history—represented most prominently today by French curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud—Jones suggests “creative and self-reflexive ways” of re-narrating time-based works while actively engaging in the process of ascribing meaning and significance to them, rather than disinterestedly remaining at a distance of the works. Through recollections of her own encounters with time-based works by artists such as Adrian Piper, Suzanne Lacy, and Nevin Aladag, Jones demonstrates how other art histories can be written. She eloquently and inconclusively interlaces

theoretical arguments, bodily sensations, historical knowledge, and political engagement, and thus provides a personally affected archive that does not respect the logic of chronology.

While a number of contributors in the first part refer to performance ontologies mentioned above, others arrive at the topic by discussing ontologies of the archive. References are made to some of the key philosophical theories, such as those provided by Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* from 1994 and Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* from 1969. The contributors also draw on a variety of other writers on archives, history, and memory, such as Giorgio Agamben, Walter Benjamin, Andreas Huyssen, and Hal Foster, in order to approach the meeting of performance and archives from different perspectives. The iterative evocation of fundamental archival theories in the essays of this anthology may serve to remind us that discussions of such complex issues can never be completed, but will continue to challenge scholars and artists in the present as well as in the future. In most of the essays we see how theoretical discussions are merged with analyses of art projects and events, demonstrating, among other things, how ontological matters may be conceptualized or visualized in actual practices.

Julie Bacon, in her text "Unstable Archives: Languages and Myths of the Visible," takes her point of departure from Derrida, Heidegger, and Foucault in order to clarify the relationship between origins and patterns of the archive. Bacon discusses the making of the archive by drawing on Derrida's notion of how archivable content is determined by the technical structure of archiving. She argues that even though archives contain patterns of social management, the origin of this effect is concealed or forgotten, and only reproduces itself in psychic and social space. In the second part of her text, Bacon focuses on the relationship between representation and agency within the field of archival politics. Referring to Mouffe and Žižek, Bacon elaborates on how the "culturalization of politics" has dispensed with the spaces of tension, and instead dismantles agency by promoting tolerance and the expansion of rights through liberalism and capitalism. In the final part of her text, Bacon introduces art projects by Gustav Metzger and Alfredo Jaar as cases for analyzing how artists investigate the relationship between document and act, and how these projects interrogate aesthetic, cultural, economic, and political effects of the archive.

Another example of an artist's use of the archive as an artistic strategy

is discussed by Peter van der Meijden, who in his essay “THIS WAY BROUWN: The Archive, Present, Past, and Future” takes the ongoing, conceptual piece *This Way Brouwn* (1961–) by Surinam/Dutch artist Stanley Brouwn as his case. Brouwn’s use of strangers in the piece, where he would ask people at the Station Square in Amsterdam to draw directions to the Concert Hall, locates the work as a performance piece. However, it is at the same time a performance that secures the drawn maps of strangers for an archive, a collection of the total sum of maps. Van der Meijden employs Derrida’s notion of “the archive fever,” the hidden secrets and heterogenousness of any archive, to argue that Brouwn’s work is from the outset motivated by both an archival desire and an anarchivolithic drive. *This Way Brouwn* is thus a work full of contradictions, part object, part action, performing in the present an act that is mapping out the future while destined to end up in an archive that speaks about the past. Van der Meijden argues that Brouwn’s work documents how time and space can be manipulated, and that the work links the archive to the future rather than the past.

Emma Willis, in her contribution “‘All This Is Left’: Performing and Re-performing Archives of Khmer Rouge Violence,” deals with archives and memory by discussing important historical and political issues of showing the “unshowable.” Taking the archive of photographs from the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia as her starting point, Willis, referring to Peggy Phelan, argues that disappearance in a political sense is here not resistance but the opposite: death and oblivion. Willis accounts on how the display of the Toul Sleng photos at MOMA is a doubling of the violence inherent in the original photo, and she includes Matthew Reason and Judith Butler, among others, to discuss how any attempt to reproduce the archive will fail and instead mark the audience as accomplice with the victimizers. Willis’s analyses of two artworks, namely Catherine Filloux’s one-act play *Photographs from S-21*, from 1998, and Rithy Panh’s documentary film *S21: Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*, from 2003, point out how the two works in each their way demonstrate performative approaches to the “evil of oblivion,” while at the same time problematizing their own aesthetics in reference to the important dialectics raised by French film director Alain Resnais. Willis sums up the ethical complexity of the archives of genocide by stating that “in the case Tuol Sleng, *showing failure* is especially historically, aesthetically, and ethically charged.”

In her text “Living Archives as Interventions in Ea Sola’s *Forgotten*

Fields,” Rivka Eisner focuses her attention on the body as “living archive” in her discussion of works by the Vietnamese-French choreographer Ea Sola. Growing up in the southern part of Vietnam during the Vietnamese-American war, Sola escaped to France in the mid-1970s, and returned to Vietnam in the early 1990s. According to Eisner, Sola investigates the body as a social and material location for active memory, and she remakes archives through creative and collective processes that reflect the politics of “archival intervention.” Eisner argues that Sola’s work *Forgotten Fields* (2010) as part of the *A Passage to Asia* exhibition pinpoints the ethics of display of Asian performers in the context of Western museums. Eisner draws on Foucault when arguing that museum collections understood as archives represent a powerful tool for distorting or erasing histories. Eisner also, by following Rebecca Schneider’s concept of “performance remains,” emphasizes bodies as living archives that question hegemonic and dominant modes of belief through performance of absence. Re-performance challenges the authenticity of the archive, but also sheds light on the politics of constructing memories of the past.

Rachel Fensham continues the attention on ontologies of moving bodies and relates dance practice to archival processes of collecting and categorizing. In “Choreographic Archives: Towards an Ontology of Movement Images,” Fensham poses the question of what kind of dance objects may constitute an archive of choreography. Dance is often conceived of as “just events” with no material traces. However, dance archives are being established these days around the world to contain performance documentation as well as digitization of existing dance archives. According to Aby Warburg, the moving image is not perceived as singular, and thus the moving image opens for gaps in the communication of time and place within a visual frame. Fensham brings Warburg’s juxtaposition and material responsiveness on to two different archives in order to suggest an ontology of movement images. One archive is the collection of textual material related to costumes in the collection of the Natural Movement training system, in which Fensham locates the provenance of the fabric in the social and political transformations in early twentieth-century England. The other archive is a digital database of dance collections in which the negotiations of taxonomy contribute to the ontology of dance. Fensham argues that “the logic of archival storage and preservation has a performative reinvention in digital objects” because the archive of

digitalized body movements constantly renews its systems by learning from its users.

Sarah Whatley, in "Dance Encounters Online: Digital Archives and Performance," provides a third perspective on dance archives, and argues that the possibility of digital online archives has introduced a new paradigm for experiencing dance performances. Whatley demonstrates how Siobhan Davies Replay, the digital archives of British choreographer Siobhan Davies, has fundamentally changed the ways to encounter and experience dance. In contrast to analogue archives that document events and secure them from historical erasure, digital archives make possible entirely new ways of engaging with archival materials, moving them closer to the liveness of the actual dance event. Whatley points to the fact that this in turn transforms the status of the dance event itself as focus shifts from the singular, original performance to different material recording its creation and production, such as diary notes and drawn sketches, thus turning it into a "library of processes." This transformation of the archive also affects its role and function in relation to the choreographer who not only regards the archive as a means of representing past performances but also as a performance in its own right, thus encouraging interaction between the online event and the onsite/onstage event of the dance.

In a collaborative text entitled "Performance, Again: Resuscitating the Repertoire," Tracy C. Davis and Barnaby King investigate methods of PaR (Performance as Research) in connection with an archive of the early nineteenth-century British comedian Charles Mathews and his series of solo performances. The authors theorize on the archive as repertoire, and point out how Mathews himself drew upon a number of different archives as well as his own experience when writing his play *Trip to America* in the 1820s. Questions of how to reenact themes such as "race," "dialect," and "fun" for a contemporary audience are posed through PaR as well as performance ethnology with the aim of not only testing the theory and producing knowledge, but also to argue that performance may be an acceptable mode of research output. Davis and King argue that Mathews in his staged scenarios was a performance ethnographer, and the essay accounts how Barnaby King in his reenactment of Mathews's performance not only connects to Mathews's but also produces new knowledge through reflective and reflexive processes. The conflation of time and space may appear as layers of ethnographic transference of repertoire, but have different effects depending on the audience. Even "failure," as

Davis and King point out, constitutes an important outcome in performance ethnography. The text makes reference to Conquergood's concept of mimesis, poiesis and kinesis, the latter as a dynamic process created in dialogue with the audience.

While Davis and King address the politics of performance ontologies in terms of reenacting historical material, Laura Luise Schultz, in "The Archive is Here and Now: Reframing Political Events as Theatre," brings forward political dimensions of more contemporary performance works. Schultz in her article counters the rigid dichotomy between performance and documentation, the live and the mediated, by arguing that the two are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent in a dialectical fashion. The dialectic between performance and documentation demands more nuanced and complex understandings of temporality and ephemerality in relation to artworks, which is clearly demonstrated in reenactments of artworks that seemingly simultaneously perform and document the original. Taking contemporary reenactments by German/Swiss artist collective Rimini Protokoll and Danish performance company Das Beckwerk as her cases, Schultz argues that radical contemporary performances operate critically within the discourses of political rhetoric in order to make implicit significations and power structures explicit. Both Rimini Protokoll and Das Beckwerk make use of existing performance rituals within politics and corporate business that are treated as readymade materials, i.e. events that through decontextualization and discursive reframing can attain new meaning. Reality for these artists seems to become a medium in itself, thus blurring the boundary between medium and message, form and content, insisting that the two are intimately connected and that displacements of meaning can occur through citation.

Archives of Performances

The second part of the anthology contains a group of articles that focuses on art projects that question and challenge the archive from within—whether it is a counter-archive at a large-scale international art event, interference in collections of intimate family photographs, or the use and misuse of surveillance recordings in public space. Referring to extended notions of archives as collective memory in the form of public institutions, national heritage, and even the chronological narrative of history, articles include descriptions of moving images and performance events to

discuss how performance within the archive itself poses questions as to the ontology and nature of the archive. Two artists conclude this section with presentations of their own practices in the cross-over space between performance and archive, explicitly demonstrating the transformative powers of artistic practices that merge research, archive building, and experimentation. Literally performing the archive here attests not only to a will to push the boundaries, but to a more fundamental understanding of the archive as a medium and an organism rather than a stable repository.

Contemporary visual art is at the core of Malene Vest Hansen's contribution "Remembering Istanbul: What, How & for Whom? Canons and Archives in Contemporary Art Biennialization." In this text, Vest Hansen focuses on the 11th Istanbul Biennial in 2009 curated by the Croatian collective *What, How & for Whom*, in the context of an increasing number of art biennials on a global scale. Vest Hansen posits that the growing importance of biennials ascribes to them a number of archival implications, most significantly the logic of exclusion and inclusion that is so central to canonization. Where most biennials according to Vest Hansen function as ideology machines legitimizing a globalized experience economy, the 11th Istanbul Biennial openly challenged the power structures inherent in biennials by exposing the production apparatus of art and of the biennial format. Vest Hansen argues that *What, How & for Whom* intended to form a counter-archive through its curatorial questioning of the mechanisms of canonization at biennials and through its open and detailed explanation of the economic framework of the biennial. However, this was done, according to Vest Hansen, at the very real risk of turning the counter-archive itself into a spectacular event.

Turning from contemporary art biennials to photography as part of an ethnographic inquiry, Mette Sandbye investigates three different archives of family photographs in "Performing and Deforming the Family Archive." Through her analyses of photos and archives, Sandbye shows that the conventional distinction between the staged and the real, the constructed and the documentary, does not exist. Sandbye argues that Derrida's notion of power and democratic involvement depends on the access and control of the archive, and in extension, of memory. After outlining the conventional perception of the nuclear family life through the anthropological studies of John Gillis, Sandbye goes on to show how such family ideology is both enhanced through photography in the commercial advertisements of Kodak Colorama from the 1950s onward, but

also criticized and questioned by the way in which private persons such as David Wham and artists such as Larry Sultan reorganize and reinterpret the archives of family photography.

Like family photographs represent archives of social relations, other types of recordings also reveal issues related to broader social concern and interference. In her article “The Performative Uses of the Surveillance Archive in Manu Luksch’s Works,” Bodil Marie Thomsen discusses British artist Manu Luksch’s works using CCTV recordings as an example of aesthetic intervention in contemporary surveillance systems. Thomsen reads Luksch’s works as a “critical interface” between the artist’s body and the archiving procedures of surveillance systems. Employing Gilles Deleuze’s notion of temporal folds, Thomsen reads Luksch’s use of pre-recorded material from London’s CCTV’s as political interventions into the expanded production of presence generated by electronic surveillance technologies. In her discussion of Luksch’s work *Faceless: Chasing the Data Shadow* from 2007 Thomsen demonstrates how difference is produced by the coupling of readymade materials from CCTV’s mixed with the overt intertextual reference to Chris Marker’s short film *La Jetée* from 1962. In this coupling of filmic time-images with real-time images of surveillance cameras Luksch establishes a critical platform that challenges the disciplinary logic of electronic control systems in contemporary Western societies. Thomsen’s reading of Luksch’s work shows both the inefficiency of the growing archives of surveillance technologies and that aesthetic intervention into these archives is possible.

In her text “*Sombra Dolorosa*—A Queer Archival Performance,” Margherita Sprio provides another type of film practice when she presents a detailed analysis of Guy Maddin’s film *Sombra Dolorosa* (2004). Sprio uses the analysis as means to discuss earlier modes of historical practice in film, and argues how Maddin in this and other works provides models for rethinking historical films in the digital age. Sprio suggests that Maddin “queers the history of film,” and thus applies the concept of a queer archival performance to describe Maddin’s practice of combining psycho-sexual perspectives with filmic references such as silent cinema, film noir, and melodrama. Sprio’s analysis includes elements of music, intertitles, colour, and emotions expressed through melodrama, as well as humor and satire. The essay points towards a number of archival perspectives, including the early films by Méliér and the Lumière Brothers. It includes references to “Mexican-ness” through the culture of the dead, as well as

references to specific Mexican art and literature. The text concludes that the cinematic devices are in constant flux with the latest technological development, and thus enforces the possible appearances and reappearances of a complex archive of cultural memory and queerness.

Cultural memory is also at stake in Annelis Kuhlmann's text on Hotel Pro Forma's interactive installation work *Undercover* at the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Kuhlmann takes as her reference point the Royal Library, both as an architectural entity as well as a public institution with responsibility to certain types of public service. Kuhlmann introduces a specific artistic event—the theatrical labyrinth entitled *Undercover* (2010) by the performance group Hotel Pro Forma under the leadership of Kirsten Dehlholm—that took place in the library. Kuhlmann points out how the curator of this avant-garde event made use of physical material as well as the architecture of the Royal Library as archive, and exposed otherwise “invisible” parts of the national heritage to the audience. Kuhlmann argues that the performative aspects of the audiences' specific experience with the space and the material pose a number of critical perspectives, such as exposing gaps of memory in the archive as well as questioning narratives of the nation embedded in the Royal Library as a national institution.

Morten Søndergaard's contribution posits two major changes in the understanding of the archive in recent years. In “Flexowriters, Punch Paper Poetry and Ontological Gaps: What Happened to the Unheard Avant-Gardes?” Søndergaard locates the changes in, on the one hand, the emergence of computer technologies that have transformed the contents as well as the workings of archives and, on the other hand, the discovery of what he designates as evil archives that has facilitated oppressive regimes. Furthermore, he suggests a third paradigm, namely that of the discovery—or recovery—of the unheard archive. Taking the Danish avant-garde and intermedial event POEX65 as his case, Søndergaard argues that much transdisciplinary work of the avant-gardes not only remains unheard of, but is lost in the ontological gaps between different archival paradigms. Søndergaard argues that this is more specifically the case with artworks of sub-media modalities such as performative and intermedia art practices.

Related to the archives of Danish avant-garde performance events are performance events staged by Martha Wilson in the context of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. in New York, during and after the 1970s. With the title “Performing the Franklin Furnace Archive,” Wilson's contribution can be viewed as a performance in its own right—a performance

of a counter-archive, as it were, attempting paradoxically to preserve the ephemeral and intermedial that is often not included in conventional archives. Wilson's article makes a double movement in "showing" samples from the Franklin Furnace Archive while at the same time anecdotally commemorating the historical contexts in which the works were created. At the core of this particular archive seems to reside the elementary logic of conceptual art, namely the belief that art is about dissemination of ideas rather than the production of objects. At once preoccupied with saving artworks that are otherwise in danger of historical erasure and discovering and inventing ways of archiving that are more adequate to the nature of the artworks involved, Franklin Furnace Archive forms an alternative archive made by artists. As indicated by the title of Wilson's article, a major concern of Franklin Furnace Archive is the production through performance of an institutional identity. The article demonstrates the means of archival procedures, which are here literally performed in an act of (another paradox) written oral history.

In "Archives and the Performance of Becoming 'Other'" by Catherine Bagnall, the modes of scholarly and artistic research come together in a story of a first-person performer, who engages in critical self-reflection through the use of archival photography and video recording. Bagnall applies a poetic language and style, which reflects the mood of the narrative, namely a mystical transformation or metamorphoses based on bodily experience. Bagnall speaks about opening the senses to nature and memory through the act of dressing up and wearing beautiful clothes inherited from her grandmothers. Bagnall describes how she dresses up and watches herself become someone else in the mirror, linking herself to the past through clothes. The bodily experience of climbing mountains or walking into cold waters wearing long skirts and petticoats is emphasized through the verbal description, but also depends on another format for the artist to fully "become" Other. The artist thus applies photographs and video as an archival device to try to catch those transformative moments.

Performing Archives

The third part of this book is framed by the notion of "performing archives"—that is, the moment or situation where the archive is transformed into a dynamic and self-reflective medium that intervenes in and challenges its own ontology. The authors represented in this part engage

in the analysis of art projects in which the audience or participants become part of the archive through performance, or in other ways embody a repository of history and cultural memory in all the “wrong” ways. In this section, too, we see a merger of the artistic and academic in the ways in which the role of scholar and artist may coincide, as when Paul Clarke in his text “Performing the Archive: the Future of the Past” and through images presents the project *Untitled Performance Stills* by Performance Re-enactment Society in 2009. Clarke presents this project as an alternative and subjective history of performance art. Clarke’s text evolves around a dialogue on Facebook between the two organizations Performance Re-enactment Society and Performance Anti Re-Enactment Organisation about the benefits or impossibilities of reenacting performance art from the past. In a postscript to the dialogue, Clarke challenges the ontology of performance as that of disappearance and ephemerality, referring to Rebecca Schneider’s concept of remains in which the reenacting body becomes a host to cultural memory. Reenactments as interpretation of the past is not about authenticity, Clarke argues, but about the relevance of the past in a contemporary context. By reusing documents stored away in the archive or museum it is possible to intervene in the present by challenging official culture and disrupting current state of affairs. Clarke argues for the archive of past practices to be released and reused for innovation in new performances across generations, and to form a “collection of recollections of live art events.” The photos produced in the Performance Re-enactment Society project may be seen as documenting acts of participants’ performance in a “performed photography,” records of an event that takes place only in the photograph itself.

Solveig Gade in her contribution “Performing Histories—Archiving Practices of Rimini Protokoll and the Atlas Group” discusses the uses of archival concepts within artworks by German/Swiss director collective Rimini Protokoll and Lebanese artist collective the Atlas Group. Solveig Gade shows how both groups employ archival material in order to perform a counter history contesting primarily the conventional chronological understanding of time, but also by questioning the spatial organization of—and the implications of authority inherent in—an archive. In her close readings of works by Rimini Protokoll and the Atlas Group, she demonstrates how concepts of time and space as well as those of fact and fiction are intentionally confounded and collapsed in order to reenact histories in ways that engage the spectator actively and critically in the

making of meaning. These subtle and unsettling works thus performatively produce their own meaning in close collaboration with their viewers, Solveig Gade argues, and in the process they profoundly question the idea of originality and authenticity.

An art installation by the Japanese contemporary artist Yoshiko Shimada provides a point of departure for Gunhild Borggreen in her article “Archives of Secrecy: Yoshiko Shimada’s art project *Bones in Tanus—Family Secrets*.” Borggreen discusses archives in terms of secrecy—not only how archives contain hidden parts and concealments in their structural origin, but also how secrecy is a fundamental part of identity formation and power relations in collective acts of remembering. Shimada’s artwork invites the gallery visitor to participate by revealing a family secret in writing, thus contributing to what Annette Kuhn calls a memory text, hereby enacting both a revelation and a betrayal. Analyzing three examples of family secrets in Shimada’s archive, Borggreen goes on to demonstrate how the actual archive in the gallery performs the visitor in a twofold manner: by displaying the visitor as an intruder behaving with improper curiosity, and at the same time establishing a contract of intimacy with the intruder. The archive is political because this display of culturally and socially informed behaviour has a persuasive power towards a participatory action which is at the same time protected through the mechanisms of secrecy.

In his text “Labor of Love: Contesting Normative Urbanization in Marianne Jørgensen’s *Love Alley*,” Rune Gade discusses social and ideological implications of time-based works in the light of Michel Foucault’s idea about the archive as the very premise of any enunciation. Taking the complex and collaborative work *Love alley* (2007–11) by Marianne Jørgensen and her collaborators as his case, Gade describes how a time-based, site specific, large-scale artwork can counter the hegemonic power of normative urbanization by playing into its regulative mechanisms. Gade argues that *Love Alley* produced a “blended space” that simultaneously mirrored and criticized the urbanization processes going on in the surrounding neighborhood and more fundamentally the notion of private property and that of distinct borders. In mirroring the normative urbanization of the neighborhood *Love alley* thus proved a parodic and self-destructing counter-archive based on self-organization and self-institutionalization.

The archive as a means of artistic practice is the focus of Louise Wolthers’s article “Escaping the Fortress of Memory: Archive Pathology in

Lindsay Seers's art." The text deals with the British artist Lindsay Seers's multimedia installation *It Has to Be This Way 2* from 2010. Wolthers argues that the medium of photography plays a key role in Seers's installation work because it is the archival medium *par excellence* and furthermore is intimately connected to the stagings of memories and traumatic events in Seers's work. Although Seers' installation constitutes a complex archive that allegedly is based on biographical facts drawn from her own family life, it does not provide any final truth about Seers, but rather produces a pathological archive that "misperforms," Wolthers argues. The conventional "objective" and indexical nature of both the archive and the photographic medium is thus undermined by a very subjective and irrational narrative infused with esoteric medieval philosophy. The archive of Seers's work is performed as much by the viewer as by the artist, Wolthers demonstrates, making it in the final analysis a staging of embodied archives, multiple characters who together produce memories.

Mathias Danbolt's text "The Trouble with Straight Time: Disruptive Anachronisms in Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's *N.O. Body*" investigates disruptive anachronisms in the film *N.O. Body* by Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz. The film reenacts the historical figure of the bearded lady Annie Jones, who was a part of P.T. Barnum's entertainments business in New York at the end of the nineteenth century. Danbolt questions and critiques the notion of "straight time" by applying the unruly figure of anachronism to his analysis of Boudry and Lorenz's work, and argues that the film *N.O. Body* engages a performative historiography that exceeds the conventional reconfiguration of the present on the basis of the archive. Boudry and Lorenz "collaborates" with their historical "friend," in a way that Danbolt identifies as "touching history": without reassuring identification, but with an anachronism that seems to follow what is termed a "queer historical impulse." Danbolt points out how not only the work, but also the archives of radical, gendered, and sexual "Others" that some of the images in the work derive from, denaturalize the historical chronology that have dominated the archives of sexology and art since the mid-eighteenth century.

As the final contribution in the volume, Marco Pustianaz starts his text "Un/archive" with a discussion of the archival impulse in contemporary art, launched by Hal Foster. Pustianaz points out that the archive needs a supplement of work, and this need involves a trust that also seems to promise a future. Taking a lead from Derrida's archival impulse as a death

drive, Marco Pustianaz argues that the archive is always a part of its own making because “the past can only be recorded *together* with the event of its own recording.” The political archive is conflicting in nature: it sustains the symbolic or reveals the hidden aspects. Pustianaz refers to Lee Edelman’s critique of the “reproductive futurism” as the ideology that offers a future for all. Edelman’s queer negativity links sexual politics and queer theory with the archive by refusing the heterosexual obligations of reproducing life for the archive. The queer negativity is not in opposition to the positive reproduction, but rather figures as parallel to the death drive by continuous negation. Pustianaz revises the negative ontology of Peggy Phelan’s infamous definition of performance by insisting that her negative is a queer negative, and he argues that such ontology of being includes a reminder of the surplus which escapes signification. In a discussion of disappearance, Pustianaz includes Rebecca Schneider, José Muñoz, and Diana Taylor for speaking of the negative disappearance as different, alternative resources that offer the possibilities of a counter-memory to the hegemonic archive.

By iterating Phelan’s “most worn-out quotations” yet again, Pustianaz not only reminds us of the relevance of negative disappearance as identity politics. He also draws an unsteady but full circle back to one of the important texts for the ongoing debates on the ontologies of performance and archives in the context of performance studies.

We like to see the book ending with such an elliptic opening rather than a conventional conclusion. By drawing on theory from the field of performance studies we hope that the articles contained in this volume contribute both to a critical history of the field and a renewal of it. We hope—on however small a scale—that the book is experienced as comprising its own “performing archive” that readers may return to and add to, thus keeping the ongoing work in motion.

Notes

- 1 Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London: Routledge, 2001).
- 2 Rune Gade and Gunhild Borggreen, "Welcome to Interregnum: In Between States," *PSi #14. Copenhagen, August 20–24, 2008* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2008), p. 4.
- 3 Ibid., p. 5.
- 4 "About," *PSi*, accessed at <http://psi-web.org/page/about> (accessed 17 December 2012).
- 5 For example Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation," *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 11–18.
- 6 Rebecca Schneider, "What I Can't Recall," *A Performance Cosmology: Testimony from the Future, Evidence of the Past*, ed. Judie Christie, Richard Gough, and

Daniel Watt (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 113–16.

- 7 Baz Kershaw, "Performance as Research: Live Events and Documents," in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy Davis (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 23–45.
- 8 Dwight Conquergood, "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics," *Communication Monographs* 58 (June 1991): 191.
- 9 Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive: The Transformation of the Archive in Contemporary Art from Repository of Documents to Art Medium* (New York: Atropos Press, 2009), p. 41.
- 10 Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 1–2.
- 12 Marvin Carlson, *Performance:*

A Critical Introduction (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. ix.

- 13 McKenzie, *Performance or Else*, p. 13.
- 14 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 148.
- 15 Ibid., p. 149.
- 16 Ibid., p. 146.
- 17 Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 51.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): 104.
- 20 Ibid., p. 105.
- 21 Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 5.
- 22 Ibid., p. 19.
- 23 Ibid., p. 26.
- 24 Ibid.